

[1803, Oct. 17.]

To The Senate and House of representatives of the United States. (282)

In calling you together, fellow citizens, at an earlier day than was ~~contemplated by~~ the act of the last session of Congress, I have not been insensible to the personal inconveniences necessarily resulting from an unexpected change in your arrangements, but matters of great public concernment have rendered this call necessary; and the interest you feel in these will supersede in your minds all private considerations.

Congress witnessed at their late session, the extraordinary agitation produced in the public mind by the suspension of our right of deposit, at the port of New Orleans, no assignment of another place having been made according to treaty. They were sensible that the continuance of that privation would be more injurious to our nation, than any consequences which could flow from any mode of redress. But reposing just confidence in the good faith of the government whose officers had committed the wrong, friendly & reasonable representations were resorted to, and the right of deposit was restored.

Previous however to this period, we had not been unaware of the danger to which our peace would be practically exposed, whilst so important a key to the commerce of the Western country remained under foreign power; difficulties too were presenting themselves as to the navigation of other streams, which, arising within our territories, pass through those adjacent, propositions had therefore been authorised for retaining, on fair conditions, the sovereignty of New Orleans, & of other possessions in that quarter interesting to our quiet, to such extent as was deemed practicable: and the provisional appropriation of two millions of dollars, to be applied & accounted for by the President of the U.S. intended as part of the price, was considered as conveying the sanction of Congress to the acquisition proposed. The enlightened government of France saw, with just discernment, the importance to both nations of such liberal arrangements as might best and permanently promote the peace, friendship & interests of both; and the majority, sovereignty of all Louisiana, which had been restored to them, has, on certain conditions, been transferred to the U.S. by instruments bearing date the 30th of April last, when these shall have received the constitutional sanction of the Senate, they will, without delay, be communicated to the Representatives also for the exercise of their functions to those conditions which are within the powers vested by the constitution in Congress, whilst the property, sovereignty of the Mississippi and its waters secure an independant outlet for the produce of the Western states, & an uninterrupted navigation through their whole course free from collision with other powers, & the dangers to our peace from that source, the fertility of the country, it's climate & extent, promise in due season, important aids to our treasury, an ample provision for our posterity, & a wide spread for the blessings of freedom and equal laws.